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Prevention of War,
Including Anthropology and War

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PREVENTION OF WAR

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ANTHROPOLOGY AND WAR

INSANITY OF WAR

AND

CHOOSING BETWEEN PEACE AND WAR

BY

ARTHUR MACDONALD

ANTHROPOLOGIST

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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PREVENTION OF WAR

BY

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The President has done his best to keep us out of war, and to such an extent that he has even been criticized for being so patient. Therefore all citizens should immediately make all possible efforts and personal sacrifice to aid him in the present crisis and its impending consequences by conscientious thinking, argument, and persuasion. Even in war the controlling forces are mental.

In walking on a precipice we have no time to look around; how to bridge the chasm is the sole question. We can cross other bridges when we come to them; one thing at a time.

1. Every corporation, company, or individual should defer any action which might involve immediate danger of war. Because

2. Is it not for the good of this country to keep out of war with honor, when it can be done by none of its citizens traveling into dangerous zones?

3. Is it dishonorable for an American citizen to avoid doing things which otherwise might force his country into war in order to defend its honor? In short—

4. Is it a dishonor to omit doing that which might otherwise require you to defend your honor? But

5. If it is a great evil for any corporation, company, or individual to defer action not only involving loss of money but unfortunately danger of war, it is an infinitely greater evil to so act as to plunge a nation into war. Therefore,

6. As most choices in this world are not between good and evil, but between two evils, let every citizen, no matter what the sacrifice, choose the lesser evil, and thus help the President to keep us out of war. For—

7. What kind of American citizen is he who, in a terrible crisis, takes risks which may plunge 100,000,000 of his fellow citizens into a vortex of blood? Or

8. What kind of a patriot is he who is so greedy to make money as to be willing to sacrifice his country on an altar of blood by plunging it into war? For—

9. War consists of the dead in convulsive states, groans and shrieking of wounded men, screams of dying horses; shrapnel ripping, tearing, lacerating, and penetrating human flesh; pierced bodies, exuding hogsheads of blood, maimed limbs, broken bones, glazing eyes, slow dying from exposure or starvation, inflammatory rheumatism from watery truncheons, skulls smashed, brains oozing out, abdomens ripped open and bowels protruding, and so on ad infinitum, producing the most excruciating pains; and it is the healthy and strong who suffer most.

10. If we must choose between war and peace, the lesser evil is peace; but if we make a mistake, it is better to err on the side of peace, for—

11. War is not only a physical hell but a mental hell. It is fear of battle; the dreaded bayonet charge and death; blasted hopes of the wounded, involving great mental torture and a future burden to army, family, and country; terrible disappointments, anxieties, and sadness of mothers and sisters at home. All these physical and mental horrors, not to mention atrocities, demonstrate war to be literally hell.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND WAR.

In the scientific study of humanity one purpose of anthropology, especially criminal anthropology, is to lessen and prevent crime between nations (war) as well as crime within nations by knowledge gained through investigation of causes. As crime is estimated according to detriment to the community, international crime or war is the worst of all crimes.

1. Animals rarely kill their own species as man does; they have better sense.
2. When an army of ants rush upon an ant hill to capture it they do not kill more than is necessary to accomplish their purpose.
3. Among savages the habit of dueling was so strong that if their enemies were not armed they furnished them with arms before attacking them, illustrating a high sense of fair play. But—
4. Retaliation became so frequent that its repetition created a taste for fighting and habit of war, which was primarily for defense of hunting grounds and crops. But—
5. War having lost its judicial character, theft and plunder became its principal aim. Man set out to steal the land itself; then war was for conquest, and enemies were either killed or made slaves.
6. Property holdings grew, great communities and States were formed, aristocracies constituted, chiefs became kings, and armies waged war. Sacerdotal classes and castes were founded and monarchs became likened unto God.
7. While war changed its form according to country, age, and race, there was no real evolution; war is a falling back into savagery (atavism); only the process varies as arms, tactics, strategy.
8. War was once a most honored profession; one was obliged either to fight for the king or to enter the clerical order; military courage took the place of all virtues. St. Augustine said, "If God commands to kill, homicide is a virtue."
9. At first firearms were objected to as placing the brave man and coward on the same level; also the noise was disconcerting. In fact, history shows that—
10. New kinds of deadly arms are called barbarous by those who do not have them or can not apply them; but such armament is sure to be used to the limit by all as soon as it has become general. Thus—
11. Air machines drop explosives, killing women and children at home. They are even more inhuman than submarines, because few persons are compelled to travel, while many must remain at home.
12. Shooting of citizens who fight soldiers is terrible, and with atrocities excites horror and amazement. But these abominable events are the result of war, the flower of militarism. Oppose war, not its results.
13. All nations are guilty of atrocities, but the number is greatly exaggerated; only a few low natures commit them, and often when drunk. Atrocities are circulated to increase hatred between nations, to make soldiers fight harder, and to gain sympathy from neutrals.
14. War may cease as soon as instruments of destruction kill non-combatants at home, causing fear, sleeplessness, and worry; or when a referendum requires those voting for war to go to the front first. For—
15. If a citizen has a right to vote for mayor, governor, or President, he certainly has the right to vote as to whether his body shall be food for cannon.
16. The poor suffer greatest, not only because they do most of the fighting but their families are further impoverished by the rich who make money out of the misery, escape military service and danger, and never fear for want of necessities. Thus hogology which is prevalent in time of peace becomes intensified in war.
17. Man's poor management of the world is shown in his allowing 1 per cent of society (criminals) to cause so much trouble, but the arrangements between nations, called diplomacy, appears infinitely worse. For—
18. Love between nations is a myth; mutual suspicion is the fact, because diplomats do officially by secret alliance what they would be ashamed of privately.
19. Civilization is necessarily superficial, for it has existed only about 6,000 years, while barbarism is hundreds of thousands of years old.
20. Much can be said for military discipline, but how can the superior mental qualities of a nation be developed under passive obedience? For the most noble sentiments in civil life as pity, love, and charity are absolutely opposed to war, the object of military discipline. The soldier must learn to kill with neither emotion nor scruple. The faithful warrior would crucify Christ if commanded.
21. Military genius condemns war. Napoleon said, "Brute force can create nothing durable"; the Duke of Wellington called war "a detestable thing"; Washington considered it "the plague of mankind"; Franklin said, "There never was a good war nor bad peace"; we know what Sherman said. Sheridan said war would eliminate itself, and Emerson called it "an epidemic of insanity."

22. Arguments for war are similar to those once employed in defending cannibalism and slavery, and could even be used to uphold crime. War arguments prove too much.

23. War is a much greater evil than disease because it sacrifices the best blood of a nation, leaving behind the wounded and physical weaklings to reproduce their kind, while disease eliminates them.

24. Militarism is estimated according to number of soldiers and sailors relative to population. The size of army to which a nation is entitled varies according to natural defenses and number of bordering countries.

25. The order in militarism is Sweden, France, Bulgaria, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Greece, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Great Britain, Netherlands, and the United States. Therefore—

26. Since we are remote from the war, protected by oceans, and with no large powers near us, we have the least excuse for involving ourselves in this war, especially as we have been enriched thereby.

27. Europe believed for a long time in a general struggle to come and was preparing for a war it did not want but which it could not see how to avoid.

28. Facility of communication by modern telegraph, telephone, and wireless may result in quick diplomacy with inadequate deliberation, and so more danger of precipitate action, from which it is difficult to retreat on account of pride. This with continuity of communication through steamship, airship, and submarine make it more difficult to avoid infringing on the rights of others, especially in war where military necessity knows no law.

29. Leading statesmen of England have repeatedly said that large, prepondering armaments are a menace to peace.

30. The repeated assurance, given time and again, that a great army and navy are the best security for peace are shown to be absolutely false by what is going on in Europe now. In science, facts talk, not theories.

31. The danger from war is here, not in Europe, for Lincoln once said, "If danger ever reaches us it must spring up among ourselves; it can not come from abroad."

32. Admirals Fletcher, Badger, Knight, Fiske, and Gen. Miles and Capt. Simms, the highest authorities in our Navy and Army, have testified that invasion of our coasts would be almost "insuperable."

33. None of the belligerents desire to infringe upon the rights of neutrals, but they are fighting for their lives and military necessity compels them to ignore neutral rights. For—

34. Self-preservation is an inalienable right; if you were fighting for your life and the only effective weapon in reach was forbidden by international law and humanity, would you let your enemy kill you rather than use the weapon? If an individual is thus justified, a nation is much more so.

35. There is not a ruler in Europe who would not surrender his throne for the sake of his people; each has done what he thought right. It is ridiculous, therefore, to blame a whole nation or think of crushing it, for who has the right to usurp the functions of the Almighty?

36. There are four general war attitudes in the United States—pro-ally, pro-German, anti-English, and neutral.

37. We are pro-English by psychological necessity, for the words and ideas fixed in the American mind are English; our knowledge is in the form of English—not German, not French. Thus the sovereignty of English dominates us. The tree gets its nutrition from where it is.

38. These temporary divisions have a right to express their honest opinions, however at variance, for freedom of thought means freedom of thought; to call it license when we do not agree with it begs the question. Yet—

39. We naturally sympathize with one or the other belligerent, and however strong we may feel, sentiment must be wholly excluded from scientific inquiry. But—

40. Many friends have become enemies through discussing the war. It was supposed that man could reason out things without quarreling, while the animal was incapable. But—

41. The persistency of war feeling is so strong that very few persons can change their opinion, and even the most impartial natures seem to lose their equilibrium in consideration of war questions.

42. War feeling seems to be temporary insanity, for nations will believe and say almost anything against their enemies (no matter how honorable): That they are not fit to exist, even women and children. Yet before and after the war they did not believe it, for it was only a hallucination.

43. Long exhaustive wars make future wars more difficult, since the large number killed and wounded causes widespread grief and horror, not to mention weight of enormous debt.

44. If we, the greatest Republic of the world, enter this war, after continually preaching peace to other nations, it will be the most terrible setback to peace the world has ever seen, and will tend to draw in other neutral nations and may even go so far as to involve South America.

45. It is a questionable humanity to plunge a nation into war for the sake of humanity (to murder in order to stop murder, as it were) when that nation is not being invaded and every other nation desires to live in peace with it. Humanity, like charity, begins at home.

46. It is a great evil to have our rights to life and property disregarded on the sea, even if not with malicious intent; but it is a much greater evil to plunge into war.

47. Whatever our opinions as to the war, we must not allow our sympathies for any of the belligerents to smother our Americanism. We must be pro-American first, last, and forever.

48. War is not only abnormal, but belongs under the head of pathology, a science which treats of all kinds of monsters. The monstrosity is militarism and navalism destroying humanity.

49. The cure for war seems to be in its last analysis educational. Thus ignorance, egotism, and selfishness can be lessened by the increase of knowledge and humanitarian feeling, which tend to counteract and undermine the war spirit. For—

50. War, like cannibalism and slavery, will eventually be stopped.

51. Peace is the normal condition of man, war abnormal. For—

52. War involves destruction of the human species and is therefore opposed to the main purpose of nature, which is the increase of the species. Yet—

53. The war feeling has been so long present in the human breast that it destroys not only the joy and peace of humanity, but even the sense of justice.

54. Peace at any price is a jingo sophism, for as nations surrender with honor, they should be able to keep peace with honor.

55. Humility is not humiliation, much less is it cowardice, for some of the most humble people are the bravest. The martyr is superior to the soldier.

56. True patriotism consists in such feelings, thoughts, volitions, and acts as are for the permanent welfare of a country. False patriotism is based upon the selfishness, egotism, ignorance, and stupidity; and yet it is asked that the blood of thousands be shed for such patriotism.

57. The doctrine that might makes right is inherently opposed to all that is highest and ideal in life, and is also in the direction of barbarism, slavery, and war. In addition—

58. War is a violation of the fundamental principles of Christianity, not to mention other great religions.

CHOOSING BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE.

The choice between entering war and remaining neutral—in short, between war and peace—may be a choice between two evils, and the decision should be on the side of the lesser evil.

Let us admit that for a country not to be equipped reasonably or adequately for war may cause it not to receive proper attention and respect from other countries. Let us admit this to be a great evil. Now, let us set over against this evil the injustice that war brings to innocent people, noncombatants, the outrages they suffer, the destruction of their homes, the shooting of them in cold blood, and their awful suffering from fear and terrorism sometimes visited upon them through military necessity. Let us picture, if possible, the almost infinite injustice and suffering that, for instance, the Russian peasants have experienced, when, with only short notice, hundreds of thousands have been ordered by their own generals to quit their homes, where to go they know not, many without conveyances to carry anything; nevertheless they must take what they can carry afoot—old and young, bedridden, sick, and crippled—must depart in the cold, many scantily clad, the poorest, who are in the majority, suffering the worst. Many, of course, die on the way, enduring untold agony from exposure, exhaustion, and starvation. Think of these poor, innocent, peaceful peasants, who only want to be let alone, whose sons and fathers were torn from them to go to the front, are, after making such sacrifices for their own country, now forced by this very country into ruin, starvation, and death, and this all on account of military necessity of their own fatherland. Think of this infinite suffering and injustice to hundreds of thousands and compare it with the admitted evil of humiliation and then pray tell us which is the lesser evil. The long-lasting and paramount effects of war horrors and devastation are infinitely a greater evil than the short and comparatively temporary effect of neglect of dignity and honor, which consists mainly of pride, egotism, and selfishness.

IMPORTANCE OF DIGNITY AND HONOR IDEA EXAGGERATED.

If nations are friendly they often will not resent most discourteous acts, while if unfriendly a trivial matter may "outrage" their honor and dignity. Once two nations came near going to war, it is said, because one ambassador was seated in advance of the other at table.

Consider how little real feeling of humiliation (much less suffering) there is among the great majority of inhabitants of a country whose officials claim to have been humiliated by the words or acts of some other Government. In the present status of humanitarian feeling three-fourths, and probably more, of the citizens who have to do the fighting do not feel this kind of humiliation; they desire to be let alone and pursue their peaceful occupations. If some of them do feel it, it is generally after efforts are made to stir them up to stand on their dignity. This dignity or honor idea is often greatly exaggerated. The officials may feel it especially, but that may be due mainly to their egotism. But how small an evil it is in comparison with the infinite evils and injustices of war upon the great majority of innocent citizens, who must sacrifice their bodies on the battle field or themselves at home.

INSANITY OF WAR.

That war is a temporary form of insanity can be easily shown by numerous historical facts. To refer to one instance only, the Boer War illustrates to what extremes the mind of a nation can go, manifesting such a degree of mental aberration as can be described as an acute form of national insanity.

Thus a conservative, sober, and dignified country like England, during one year or more, believed and said almost everything bad against the Boers; that, for instance, they were not fit to exist, even women and children. But the Boers were a thrifty, independent, and deserving people. The English people were thus possessed of hallucinations enduring a year or more, which they did not believe before and do not believe now.

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